

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9917

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FOR M/DG GERSHENSON

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AFSP, APER, AMGT
SUBJ: DIPLOMATIC RANK FOR STAFF PERSONNEL

1. FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO COLOMBIA WHO DO NOT HAVE DIPLOMATIC TITLES SUFFER FINANCIAL HARDSHIP AND GREAT INCONVENIENCE BECUASE OF THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT'S REQUIREMENT THAT THEY RE-EXPORT THEIR POVS WHEN THEY ARE TRANSFERRED. THIS IS A DESTRUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR AN AUTOMOBILE, SO THAT MOST VEHICLES ARE NOT WORTH EXPORTING AT THE END OF A NORMAL TOUR. FURTHERMORE, THE NORMAL DELAY OF FROM THREE TO FOUR MONTHS EXPERIENCED BY THE EMPLOYEE IN IMPORTING HIS CAR IS DUPLICATED AT THE END OF THE TOUR, SINCE IT TAKES THAT LONG (WITH CORRESPONDING PAPER WORK) TO OBTAIN PERMISSION TO EXPORT THE CAR.

2. IN CONTRAST, FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL WITH DIPLOMATIC STATUS ARE ALLOWED TO SELL THEIR POVS HERE WHEN THEY ARE TRANSFERRED. THOSE WITHOUT DIPLOMATIC STATUS FIND THEMSELVES IN A "SECOND CLASS" CATEGORY NOT ONLY VIS-A-VIS FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS BUT ALSO AMERICAN SUPPORT PERSONNEL WHO WORK FOR OTHER AGENCIES OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. THESE EMPLOYEES ENJOY THE EQUIVALENT OF DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGE, BY VIRTUE OF SPECIAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THEIR AGENCIES AND THE HOST GOVERNMENT. THIS INVIDIOUS AND INEQUITABLE SITUTATION IS UNCLASSIFIED

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UNDERMINING TO THE MORALE OF OUR STAFF PERSONNEL.

3. IN VIEW OF THE RAPIDLY GROWING AND LONG OVERDUE CONCERN IN THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE WELFARE AND STATUS OF FOREIGN SERVICE SECRETARIES AND C&R PERSONNEL, THE EMBASSY HOPES THAT THE FOLLOWING PROPOSAL, WHILE POSSIBLE NOT ORIGINAL, MAY GAIN EARLY AND SYMPATHETIC ACCEPTANCE.

4. IN BRIEF, OUR PROPOSAL IS TO GIVE ASSISTANT ATTACHE STATUS TO ALL SECRETARIAL AND C&R PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO THIS DIPLOMATIC MISSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH 3 FAM 615.2B. IN ADDITION TO THE MORALE FACTOR WHICH CAN CLEARLY "IMPAIR THE EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE OF THE . . . FUNCTIONS OF (THIS) FOREIGN SERVICE POST, " DIPLOMATIC TITLE FOR ALL C&R PERSONNEL (NOT JUST THE CRO) COULD BE READILY JUSTIFIED ON THE GROUNDS OF SECURITY.

5. ALTHOUGH THE LAST SENTENCE OF 3 FAM 611.3A. MIGHT BE CITED AS AN ARGUMENT AGAINST THE PROVISION OF TITLES TO SECRETARIAL AND C&R PERSONNEL, WE PREFER TO VIEW THE GRANTING OF TITLES AS A MEANS TO AVOID PERSONAL HARDSHIP AND PREVENT UNACCEPTABLE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CERTAIN U.S. EMPLOYEES BY A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT RATHER THAN AS A MEANS OF AUTHORIZING SOME KIND OF BENEFIT TO THEM.

6. AN INFORMAL SURVEY OF OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS HERE (BOTH WEST EUROPEAN AND LATIN AMERICAN) INDICATES THAT A NUMBER OF OTHER COUNTRIES ARE NOW ACCORDING THEIR STAFF PERSONNEL DIPLOMATIC STATUS (E.G. THIRD SECRETARY OF ATTACHE).

7. DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS REQUESTED.
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